

# Basic Communication Audit

The purpose of having a strategic communications plan is to help you organize and focus your organization, to integrate your organization's communications activities and efforts. A good plan will help you select the communication tools/methods that will help you be most effective and achieve whatever your objectives are, and to find the best way to convey info, or educate, or mobilize.

The purpose of doing an *audit* is to help get everyone on the same page. Everyone must agree on the answers to these kinds of questions: What is your overarching, core purpose? What kind of nonprofit are you (there are many), what are your objectives? Who are your various audiences and what are you hoping they'll do? What is the best way to reach them? What tools and resources do you have? And so on.

**1. What is your mission? Why do you exist? At your core, what are you about? This is the core purpose you always come back to, the bottom-line touchstone for all you do.**

**2. Generally, what do you? What are your objectives?**

	Yes	No
Educate		
Distribute information		
Promote advocacy &/or political action		
Promote events & activities		
Provide services		
Influence people, change behavior		
Mobilize people around a cause		
Other (what?)		

**3. Who are you trying to reach (you may have different audiences)?**

		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No or N/A</b>
Your constituents or stakeholders may be:	General public (everyone who needs or could benefit from or enjoy your message or service)		
	Specific segment of public (teens, bike supporters)		
	Clients (hungry, poor, jobless)		
Decision makers:	Legislators who could enact policy, laws		
	Elected officials who could advance your efforts in some way		
Supporters:	People who support your cause, support your org by attending events, doing activities, or some other ways		
Funders:	People who support your cause, support your org and GIVE \$ (or could give)		

#### 4. What do you want those people to do?

	Yes	No (or N/A)
Avail themselves of, receive your services?		
Attend an event? (attend a celebration, attend a rally)		
Visit? (a museum, a science center)		
Learn something?		
Do something (like plant a tree, adopt a family)		
Change behavior? (to drive less, stop smoking)		
Become a member?		
Write a letter? (to state legislature, city council)		
Volunteer or offer service? (to help the cause, to help the organization (board, intern))		
Give money? Buy a tile?		
Other (what?)		

## 5. What is the most effective way to reach your audience?

How you communicate with each of your audiences will determine your choice of *tools*. We're going to focus on some key ones (this is not the universe, but these are the key tools used in the NPO world today).

<b>Form of Communication</b>	<b>Public/clients</b>	<b>Decision makers</b>	<b>Supporters</b>	<b>Funders</b>
Website (traditional)				
Website (2.0, including				
Blogging, RSS, forums, polls)				
Printed newsletters				
Direct mail				
Calendar listings				
Email communications (incl mail lists, e-newsletters, e-blasts)				
Brochures and other print materials				
Press releases, feature stories				
Radio or tv spots				
Advertising (print, tv, radio) or PSAs				
Online media (vlogging, podcasts, streaming media, digital stories)				
Online social media (Twitter, Facebook, text/mobile, IM)				
Visits or a presence where clients are				
Public appearances, talks				
Community events (i.e., tabling)				

**6. How will you know when you are successful?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No or N/A</b>
Increased participation		
Increased membership		
Increased friends or advocates		
Increased volunteers		
More people on mail list (either snail mail or email)		
More visits to your website		
More money raised		
Decision making in your favor (can be local jurisdiction or legislation)		
Other		

**7. What is the state of your electronic infrastructure?**

**Database:**

- a. how do you collect information in your organization?**
- b. are contacts held in a common database accessible by all staff?**
- c. describe the condition of your current contact database.**
- d. what software do you use?**
- e. how clean is your database?**
- f. how frequently are contacts updated?**
- g. who is responsible for updating?**
- h. what kind of database do you need?**

**contact/client management**

**information and referral**

**donations, fund tracking**

**i. do you need more than one and should they be linked?**

**Website:**

- a. how satisfied are you with your org's website?**
- b. summarize its current features.**
- c. what works well?**
- d. what can be improved?**
- e. are there websites that have features that you would like to incorporate w/in your own?**
- f. are you planning to upgrade in the near future? when?**
- g. where is your website hosted?**
- h. are you still in touch with your web designer?**
- i. what maintains your website w/in your org?**
- j. are you familiar with CMS?**
- k. are you satisfied with your newsletter functionality?**
- l. do you want to track user info and user data?**
- m. do you, would you like to collect contact info from the people who visit your site?**
- n. would you like to survey your members on a regular basis? (have you ever and what was your experience?)**
- o. is your site searchable?**
- p. are you interested in calendar functions?**
- q. is there a way for members to share stories?**
- r. do you collect donations?**
- s. are you interested in the younger generation of philanthropists?**
- t. would you like to incorporate forms into your website?**
- u. does your site use RSS feeds?**
- v. are people blogging about your organization?**
- w. would you like to incorporate additional images, photos or audio/video into your site?**
- x. would you like an online work area for staff and/or board members?**
- y. are you interested in online project management?**
- z. will your staff need training to support these activities?**